

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Chair, I am pleased to offer an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 that addresses the plight of Iraqis who have worked for the United States in Iraq and whose lives have been placed in grave danger for their service.

Under the Status of Forces Agreement signed in November 2008, there is not ONE mention of Iraqis who have worked with the United States, which I find to be most unsettling.

And while the December 2011 date for withdrawal of our troops seems far away, there is another benchmark of August 2010, when nearly 50,000 troops will be withdrawn from Iraq, which will limit our ability to protect U.S.-affiliated Iraqis at risk.

These U.S.-affiliated Iraqis have risked their lives to work alongside our troops, diplomats, and aid workers to help build a more stable and Democratic Iraq committed to peaceful pluralism among both factions and sects. They are considered to be “collaborators” or “traitors” by Al Qaeda in Iraq and other insurgent groups and many have paid the ultimate sacrifice for their work at the hands of these terrorists.

I am increasingly concerned that the Obama administration has turned its focus away from this crisis. As we drawdown U.S. troops in Iraq, the thousands of Iraqis who work for our government and live on our bases will no longer have the security of our military once we are gone. The United States cannot turn its back at this critical juncture.

An organization that I have had the privilege to work with over the past several years, The List Project to Resettle Iraqi Allies has done a remarkable job on this front in advocating for and providing pro bono representation to these courageous Iraqis at risk.

The List Project's founder and executive director Kirk Johnson recently published a report entitled “Tragedy on the Horizon: A History of Just and Unjust Withdrawal.” It is a report that I would encourage all of my colleagues to read.

In particular, the report discusses the withdrawal of British troops from southern Iraq two years ago and states, “militias conducted a systematic manhunt for Iraqi employees of the U.K. In a single incident, 17 interpreters were publically executed, and reports surfaced of others dragged to their deaths behind cars through the streets of Basrah. To imagine this as an isolated experience ignores this history of withdrawal, a bloody and predictable churn of violence upon those who ‘collaborated’ with the departing power.”

Time is of the essence. We must put in place a plan to ensure that those Iraqis allies who have helped our country are protected. We have a moral obligation to do this, and we still have time to avert a crisis—but not a lot of time.

Turning our backs now would be fatal for our Iraqi allies and would set a negative precedent for other theaters of war in particular Afghanistan where we need to win the loyal collaboration and hearts and minds of the population.

This week marked a turning point, in that the number of troops in Afghanistan exceeded those in Iraq for the first time since 2003. Reports now suggest that Afghans working as in-

terpreters for the United States are increasingly facing the same lethal risks endured by our Iraqi employees.

We will be hard-pressed to find more help in Afghanistan if the United States is seen as quick to abandon its friends.

IN RECOGNITION OF SANDY BOWEN'S DECADES OF SERVICE TO NATIONAL SAFE PLACE AND AMERICA'S YOUNG PEOPLE

HON. JOHN A. YARMUTH

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, May 28, 2010

Mr. YARMUTH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize a woman who spent her career tirelessly fighting to ensure young people in crisis have a place to get help, no matter where they are and no matter what they are going through.

National Safe Place is a national organization that oversees a network of shelters and resources that provide young people with immediate assistance, whenever they need it. Sandy Bowen has played an absolutely integral role in spreading the organization's mission across the Nation, transforming Safe Place from a single service located in one community into a nationally-renowned network that has touched the lives of almost a quarter of a million young people in 38 states. And we in Louisville couldn't be more proud that she calls our community home.

As Sandy reaches the end of her exceptional career of service at Safe Place, we should have known from the start that she was destined to live a life dedicated to helping others. Her first job, in fact, was operating a nursery school and a pre-school in her backyard where children could attend for just \$1 a week.

After working in the Jefferson County Public School system and for the 4-H Program, Sandy joined Safe Place. At the time, it was a local program operated in greater Louisville, established to give young people in crises a comfortable and safe place when they have nowhere else to turn.

Sandy came on board a few months after its founding. Since that time, it is no coincidence that National Safe Place has grown in leaps and bounds, expanding across the country, garnering recognition from Congress and 3 Presidents, and helping and educating tens of thousands of young people.

Safe Place has served 100,000 young people in Kentucky alone, and every citizen of our commonwealth can be particularly proud of its extraordinary work. Our home-grown organization has flourished thanks to Sandy Bowen's leadership, developing into a nationally-recognized symbol of hope and security for young people.

When she retires this year, Sandy Bowen will leave behind a legacy of service to our Nation, a record of commitment to helping those most in need, and a safe place for young people throughout our Nation.

I urge my colleagues to join me in thanking Sandy Bowen for her career of service, and I wish her nothing but luck and continued success in the next chapter of her life.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011

SPEECH OF

HON. PHIL GINGREY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 27, 2010

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5136) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes:

Mr. GINGREY of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the Polis/Langevin/Cohen amendment that has been included in the En Bloc amendment No. 4. Unfortunately—despite what proponents of this amendment are saying—I do not believe that this amendment does anything to alleviate the draconian problems of section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007.

Even if this amendment passes, Americans will still not be able to increase the supply of fuels from alternative sources derived from resources available in the United States. Oil shale will remain trapped in rock, and we will not be able to use clean carbon captured coal-to-liquid for fuel.

The amendment intends to create an exception under section 526 for generally available fuel not predominately produced from a non-conventional petroleum source, and all federal agencies—including DoD—will still be able to purchase Canadian fuels with traces of oil sands that may create more of a carbon footprint than completely conventional fuel. However, I am concerned that “predominantly from a nonconventional source” is not defined in this amendment. This stipulation could expose gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel produced from crude oil—with significant components of oil sands—to the prohibition in section 526.

Mr. Chairman, even under the provisions of this amendment, DoD—as well as every other federal agency—won't be able to utilize any of the sources of fuel that may be totally derived from clean domestic alternatives we have readily available.

This is precisely why I offered an amendment to the Rules committee on this bill; to provide a waiver to the Secretary of Defense to be freed from the handcuffs of section 526. I support a full repeal of section 526 because the cost of refined product for DoD has increased by over 500 percent in the last ten years when volume only increased by 30 percent. I offered my amendment—that was rejected by House Democrats—as a middle ground to not stifle domestic energy innovation and to save taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Chairman, I fear that this amendment does nothing to rectify the underlying problem with section 526 that prevents the Federal Government from utilizing domestic resources to reduce fuel costs, so I must oppose this amendment and ask all my colleagues to do the same.